

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

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NTSB urges ban on some helicopter flights at Washington airport where 67 people died in midair crash

By **JOSH FUNK, JOHN SEEWER and NATHAN ELLGREN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal investigators looking into the cause of the January collision between a passenger jet and an Army helicopter near Washington, D.C., that killed 67 people recommended a ban on some helicopter flights Tuesday, saying the current setup “poses an intolerable risk.”

National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy laid out frightening statistics to underscore the danger that has existed for years near Ronald Reagan National Airport and expressed anger that it took a midair collision for it to come to light.

In just over three years, she said, there were 85 close calls when a few feet in the wrong direction could have resulted in the same kind of accident that happened on Jan. 29 when the military helicopter collided with an American Airlines jet over the Potomac River as the plane was approaching the airport.

The federal safety board determined that the existing separation distance between planes and helicopters at the airport is “insufficient and poses an intolerable risk to aviation safety,” Homendy said.

She said she was devastated for families that are grieving because they lost loved ones. Among the victims were 28 members of the figure skating community.

“It shouldn’t take tragedy to require immediate action,” she said.

Proposed changes aimed at improving safety Under the current practice



National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy, accompanied by investigator in charge Brice Banning, left, speaks about the recent mid-air collision of an American Airlines flight and a Black Hawk helicopter near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, at a news conference in Washington, Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

helicopters and planes can be as close as 75 feet apart from each other during landing, Homendy said. Investigators have identified 15,214 instances of planes getting alerts about helicopters being in close proximity between October 2021 and December 2024, she said.

Investigators determined that planes got alerts to take evasive action because they were too close to a helicopter at least once a month between October 2011 and December 2024, Homendy said.

Following the midair collision, the FAA took steps to restrict helicopter flights around Reagan National Airport to ensure that planes and helicopters are no longer sharing the same airspace. Now flights are put on hold temporarily when helicopters need to pass by the airport.

The NTSB’s proposal would close a vital route for law enforcement, Coast Guard patrols and government operations flights.

Homendy said the NTSB is recommending that the FAA find a “permanent solution” for alternate routes farther away from the airport for helicopter traffic. Searching for a cause of the crash

Investigators have said the helicopter may have had inaccurate altitude readings in the moments before the crash, and the crew may not have heard key instructions from air traffic controllers. The collision likely occurred at an altitude just under 300 feet (91 meters), as the plane descended toward the helicopter, which was well above its 200-foot (61-meter) limit for that location.

The helicopter pilots may have also missed part of

another communication, when the tower said the jet was turning toward a different runway, Homendy said last month.

The helicopter was on a “check” flight that night where the pilot was undergoing an annual test and a test on using night vision goggles, Homendy said. Investigators believe the crew was wearing night vision goggles throughout the flight.

The Army has said the Black Hawk crew was highly experienced, and accustomed to the crowded skies around the nation’s capital.

The NTSB in its ongoing investigation will look at the amount of traffic at Reagan and the staffing in the control tower to determine if either of those factors played a role in the collision. It will take more than a year to get the final NTSB

report on the cause.

While Homendy laid out those scary statistics about near misses, she also said it’s still incredibly safe to fly, adding that she most often flies out of Reagan.

Aviation safety expert John Cox said he flew in and out of Reagan as a pilot in all different kinds of planes since the late 1970s and sometimes received collision alerts about nearby helicopters, but it was usually easy to see that the helicopter was going to pass behind the plane.

“That’s just something that occurred going in and out of there, and it worked successfully for decades,” said Cox, who is CEO of aviation safety consulting firm Safety Operating Systems in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Cox said multiple things had to go wrong for this collision to happen.

A spate of recent aviation disasters

Within just a month’s time earlier this year, there were four major aviation disasters in North America, including the midair collision over the Potomac and most recently in mid-February when a Delta flight flipped and landed on its roof at Toronto’s Pearson Airport, injuring 21 people.

Those accidents and close calls left some worried about the safety of flying even though fatal crashes are rare and the track record of U.S. airlines is remarkably sound.

President Donald Trump blamed the midair collision over Washington, D.C., on what he called an “obsolete” air traffic control system and promised to replace it. He also faulted the helicopter for flying too high. □

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Trump selects a new Tesla on White House driveway to show support for Elon Musk

By CHRIS MEGERIAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

President Donald Trump shopped for a new Tesla on the White House driveway on Tuesday, selecting a shiny red sedan to show his support for Elon Musk's electric vehicle company as it faces blowback because of his work to advance the president's political agenda and downsize the federal government. "Wow," Trump said as he eased his way into the driver's seat of a Model S. "That's beautiful."

Musk got in on the passenger side and joked about "giving the Secret Service a heart attack" as they talked about how to start a vehicle that can reach 60 miles (95 kilometers) per hour in a few seconds.

Trump told reporters that he would write a check for the car, which retails for roughly \$80,000, and leave it at the White House so his staff can drive it. The president also said he hopes his



Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, left, and Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump attend a campaign event at the Butler Farm Show, Oct. 5, 2024, in Butler, Pa.

Associated Press

purchase will boost Tesla, which is struggling with sagging sales and declining stock prices.

"It's a great product," he said. Referring to Musk, Trump said "we have to

celebrate him."

It was the latest and most unusual example of how Trump has demonstrated loyalty to Musk, who spent heavily on his comeback campaign last year and

has been a key figure in his second administration. Tesla's stock price increased nearly 4% on Tuesday after dropping almost 48% since Trump took office in January.

The Republican president announced on social media overnight that he was going to buy a new Tesla as "a show of confidence and support for Elon Musk, a truly great American."

Musk continues to run Tesla as well as the social media platform X and the rocket manufacturer SpaceX while also serving as Trump's adviser.

"Elon Musk is 'putting it on the line' in order to help our Nation, and he is doing a FANTASTIC JOB!" Trump wrote. "But the Radical Left Lunatics, as they often do, are trying to illegally and collusively boycott Tesla, one of the World's great automakers, and Elon's 'baby,' in order to attack and do harm to Elon, and everything he stands for."

Others have also rallied to Musk's defense. Alex Jones, a prominent conspiracy theorist, said that he bought a customized version of a Cybertruck that he'll give away to a customer of his online store next month. □

2 senior judges, appointed by Republicans, speak out about threats against federal judiciary

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two senior federal judges, both appointed by Republican presidents, spoke out Tuesday against threats of violence and impeachment against their colleagues in the judiciary.

"Threats against judges are threats against constitutional government. Everyone should be taking this seriously," said Judge Richard Sullivan, whom President Donald Trump appointed to the federal appeals court in New York.

Billionaire Elon Musk and other Trump allies have railed at judges who have blocked parts of Trump's agenda, threatening impeachment and launching personal attacks. The Federal Judges Association, the largest such organization, issued a rare

public statement decrying "irresponsible rhetoric shrouded in disinformation" that could undermine public confidence in the judiciary.

Sullivan joined Judge Jeffrey Sutton of the federal appeals court based in Cincinnati, Ohio, in a call with reporters following a meeting of the Judicial Conference, the judiciary's governing body.

Security for judges in courthouses and their homes was part of the discussion in the closed-door meeting, Sullivan and Sutton said.

"We allocate disappointment to half the people that come before us. Criticism is no surprise as part of the job. But I do think when it gets to the level of a threat, it really is about attacking judicial independence. □



Judge Jeffrey Sutton, of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, participates in a panel discussion during the Federalist Society's National Lawyers Convention in Washington, Nov. 17, 2016.

Associated Press

Immigration officials defend authority to hold migrants at Guantanamo Bay

By **MORGAN LEE**

Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — U.S. immigration and military authorities disclosed Monday that immigrants from 27 countries were being held at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, while revealing new details of conditions of confinement and defending the government's authority to transfer and hold immigrants at the military base.

Court filings on behalf of the Homeland Security and Defense departments indicated that 40 immigrants with final deportation orders were being held at Guantanamo Bay as of Friday with 23 labelled "high risk" and held individually in cells. The remainder were held in another area of special housing for migrants, in groups of up to six.

Civil rights attorneys sued the Trump administration this month to prevent it from transferring 10 migrants detained in the U.S. to Guantanamo Bay and filed statements from men held there who said they were mistreated in conditions that of one of them called "a living hell."

Responding to the lawsuit, Justice Department attorneys argued Monday that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has broad authority to hold im-



In this Aug. 29, 2021, file photo reviewed by U.S. military officials, a flag flies at half-staff as seen from Camp Justice in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba.

migrants with final removal orders at Guantanamo Bay "for only so long as their removal remains significantly likely to occur in the reasonably foreseeable future."

U.S. immigration and military authorities "do not need to show that (Naval Station Guantanamo Bay) is essential to that plan, logistically uncomplicated, or that it is the least expensive option," the Trump administration argued in the court filings.

Administration attorneys also said, "the government does not dispute that the

mass removal efforts are intended in part to deter illegal migration."

New written testimonials from ICE and military leaders say that Guantanamo Bay detainees are being "treated with dignity and respect," describing access to legal counsel, regular meals, laundry service and medical care as "not inconsistent with other ICE detention facilities."

At the same time, the government testimonials also acknowledge the naval base is not accommodating requests for in-person

visits by legal counsel, while some detainees refused to eat and some have been placed in hand and leg restraints after threatening to harm themselves. Strip searches are conducted upon arrival for "high-risk" detainees, with "pat downs" searches when immigrants leave certain holding areas.

Personal phone calls of up to five minutes each day are being allowed, with conversations monitored by ICE, authorities said.

Trump has said he will send the worst criminal migrants

to Guantanamo Bay, but civil rights attorneys say many detainees transferred to there don't have a serious criminal record or any criminal record.

Lee Gelernt, an ACLU attorney in the case for immigrants aiming to block transfers to Guantanamo, said the ACLU does not have a full list of immigrants detained at the base or their countries of origin. He declined to comment further ahead of a court hearing in the case.

The 10 men involved in the lawsuit came to the U.S. in 2023 or 2024, seven from Venezuela, and the others from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Trump in January said he wanted to expand immigrant detention facilities at Guantanamo to hold as many as 30,000 people, and his administration on Feb. 4 began flying immigrants there.

Initially nearly 200 Venezuelans immigrants were transferred to Guantanamo and later flown to their home country. No Venezuelans were detained at Guantanamo, as of Friday. While the U.S. naval base in Cuba is best known for the suspects brought in after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, it has a small, separate facility used for decades to hold migrants. □

Man found with a live turtle concealed in his pants by TSA at a New Jersey airport



This photo provided by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) shows a turtle in a box after a Pennsylvania man was caught with the turtle concealed in his pants when the TSA body scanner triggered an alarm in the area of the man's groin on Friday, March 7, 2025, at Newark Liberty International Airport in Newark, N.J.

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A Pennsylvania man who was going through security at a New Jersey airport was found to have a live turtle concealed in his pants, according to the federal Transportation Security Administration.

The turtle was detected Friday after a body scanner alarm went off at Newark Liberty International Airport. A TSA officer then conducted a pat-down on the East Stroudsburg man and determined there was something concealed in the groin area of his pants.

When questioned further, the man reached into his pants and pulled out the turtle, which was about 5 inches (12 centimeters) long and wrapped in a small blue towel. He said it was a red-ear slider turtle, a species that is popular as a pet.

The man whose name was not released was escorted from the checkpoint area by Port Authority police and ended up missing his flight. The turtle was confiscated, and it's not clear if the turtle was the man's pet or why he had it in his pants.

"We have seen travelers try to conceal knives and other weapons on their person, in their shoes and in their luggage, however I believe this is the first time we have come across someone who was concealing a live animal down the front of his pants," said Thomas Carter, TSA's Federal Security Director for New Jersey. "As best as we could tell, the turtle was not harmed by the man's actions."

He said the incident remains under investigation, and it wasn't clear if the man would face any charges or penalties. □

U.S. resumes military aid and intelligence sharing as Ukraine says it is open to a 30-day ceasefire

By MATTHEW LEE

Associated Press

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (AP)

—The Trump administration lifted its suspension of military aid and intelligence sharing for Ukraine, and Kyiv signaled that it was open to a 30-day ceasefire in the war with Russia, pending Moscow's agreement, American and Ukrainian officials said Tuesday following talks in Saudi Arabia. The administration's decision marked a sharp shift from only a week ago, when it imposed the measures to push Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to enter talks to end the war with invading Russian forces. The suspension of U.S. assistance came days after Zelenskyy and Trump argued about the war in a tense White House meeting.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who led the U.S. delegation to the talks in Jeddah, said Washington would present the ceasefire offer to the Kremlin, which has thus far opposed anything short of a permanent end to the conflict without accepting any concessions.

"We're going to tell them this is what's on the table. Ukraine is ready to stop shooting and start talking. And now it'll be up to them to say yes or no," Rubio told reporters after the meeting. "If they say no, then we'll unfortunately know what the impediment is to peace here."

President Donald Trump's national security adviser, Mike Waltz, added: "The Ukrainian delegation today made something very clear, that they share President Trump's vision for peace."

Tuesday's discussions, which lasted for nearly eight hours, appeared to put rest, for the moment at least, the animosity between Trump and Zelenskyy that erupted during the Oval Office meeting last month.

Waltz said the negotiators "got into substantive details on how this war is going to permanently end,"



Soldiers of Ukraine's 100th mechanised brigade hold posters saying thanks the US for support during flashmob at the US made APC Bradley on the front line near Toretsk, Donetsk region, Ukraine, Monday, March 10, 2025.

including long-term security guarantees. And, he said, Trump agreed to immediately lift the pause in the supply of billions of dollars of U.S. military aid and intelligence sharing. Senior officials began meeting only hours after Russia shot down over 300 Ukrainian drones. It was Ukraine's biggest attack since the Kremlin ordered the full-scale invasion of its neighbor. Neither U.S. nor Ukrainian officials offered any comment on the barrage.

Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, is expected to travel later this week to Moscow, where he could meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to a person familiar with the matter but not authorized to comment publicly. The person cautioned that scheduling could change. Meanwhile, in an address posted shortly after Tuesday's talks ended, Zelenskyy reiterated Ukraine's commitment to achieving a lasting peace, emphasizing that the country has sought an end to the war since its outset.

"Our position is absolutely clear: Ukraine has strived for peace from the very first second of this war, and we want to do everything possible to achieve it as soon as possible securely and in a way that ensures war does not return," Zel-

enskyy said.

Ukrainian presidential aide

Andriy Yermak told reporters ahead of the talks that the most important thing was "how to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine." He said security guarantees were important to prevent Russia from invading again in the future. Elsewhere, Russia launched 126 drones and a ballistic missile at Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said, as part of Moscow's relentless pounding of civilian areas during the war.

On the streets of Kyiv, Ukrainians kept an eye on the Saudi talks.

Lena Herasymenko, a psychologist, said she accepts that compromises will be necessary to end the war, but she said they must be "reasonable." □

Associated Press

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The EU wants to increase deportations and supports 'return hubs' in third countries

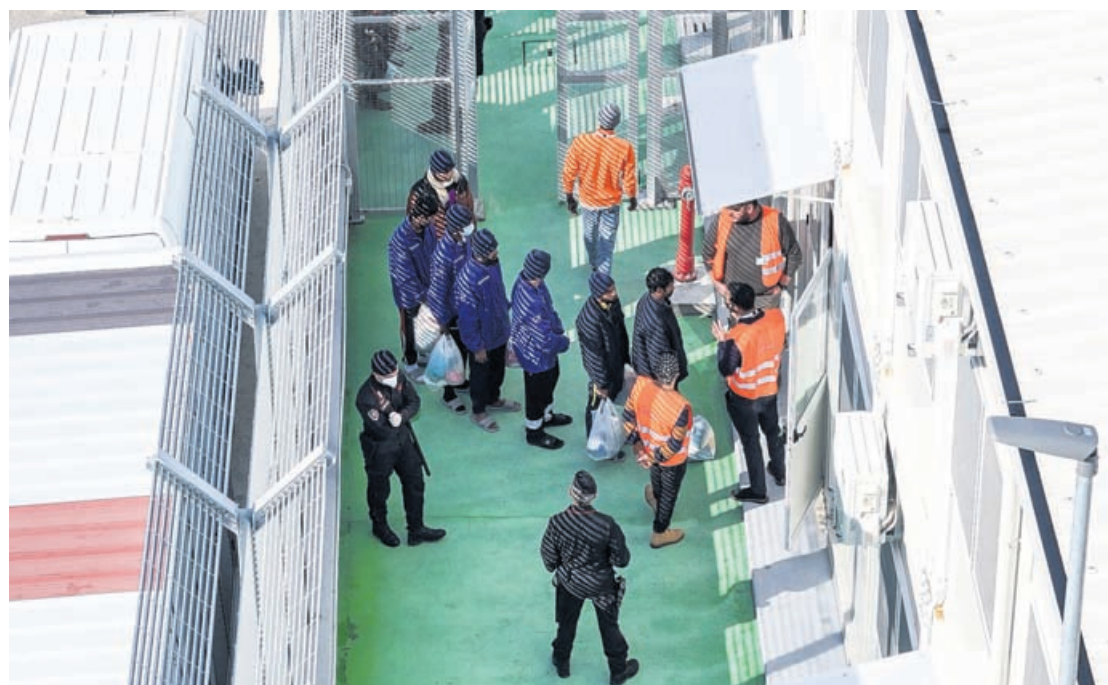
STRASBOURG, France (AP)

— The European Union wants to increase deportations and is opening the way for "return hubs" to be set up in third countries for rejected asylum-seekers, according to a new migration proposal unveiled Tuesday.

Only 20% of people with a deportation order are effectively removed from EU territory, according to the European Commission, which presented the "European System for Returns" in Strasbourg as a potential solution.

The proposal aims to set a standard for all 27 members of the bloc and allow national authorities from one country to enforce the deportation order issued by another. Such rules were missing from the EU's migration and asylum pact approved last year.

"The European system needs to be clear that when someone is issued a return decision they are being told to leave, not just the country but the entire European Union," said Magnus Brunner, the EU's commissioner for migration, who called the current 20%



An aerial photograph taken by a drone shows migrants entering a detention center for processing following earlier court rejections, in the port of Shengjin, northwestern Albania, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025.

Associated Press

removal rate unacceptable.

"Any figure would be an improvement, but we don't want to pin down any specific figures," he added.

For the proposal to work, however, the EU needs to get countries of origin to readmit their citizens. Brunner acknowledged that the commission and member states are still working on improving that.

The "return hubs," a euphemism for deportation centers, would apply only to people whose asylum requests have been rejected and exclude unaccompanied minors, Brunner said. He added that any future deal would have to include safeguards to ensure international law and human rights are respected.

The EU wouldn't set up or manage such centers,

which could be in Europe or elsewhere, but would create the legal framework to allow states to negotiate with non-EU countries willing to take the rejected asylum-seekers.

This differs from the existing but so-far ineffective deal signed by Italy with Albania to offshore the asylum processing of migrants rescued at sea. At the time, the contentious plan was

applauded by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as an "out-of-the-box" solution to manage irregular migration but courts in Italy have repeatedly blocked it.

Brunner reiterated the need for "innovative" solutions to manage irregular migration and asylum a highly politicized issue that the far right has used across the continent to gain votes.

While the potential "return hubs" were the most striking aspect of the proposal, it also included stricter punishments for those absconding deportations and extends the detention of rejected asylum-seekers posing a flight or security risk from 18 months to 24 months. The commission did not provide any data on how many people currently pose a "security risk." European Commission Executive Vice President Henna Virkkunen, who presented the new migration reform alongside Brunner, said the proposal was tougher but fair and would encourage migrants to leave voluntarily before they had to be forcibly removed. □

Caribbean leaders oppose US policy targeting Cuban medical missions, saying they're critical

By BERT WILKINSON
Associated Press

GEORGETOWN, Guyana

(AP) — Caribbean leaders are pushing back against a new U.S. policy that aims to crack down on Cuban medical missions, saying that the work of hundreds of Cuban medical staff across the region is essential.

Hugh Todd, Guyana's foreign minister, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that foreign ministers from a 15-member Caribbean trade bloc known as Caricom recently met with U.S. Special Envoy for Latin America Mauricio Claver-Carone in Washington, D.C. after the U.S. threatened to restrict the visas of those involved with Cuban

missions, which U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has called "forced labor." "The U.S. is a strategic partner to Caricom, but this very important issue has to be dealt with at the level of heads of government,"

Todd said.

Overall, Cuba has some 24,180 doctors working in 56 nations, with the missions boosting health care across the Caribbean, especially in impoverished nations with limited medi-

cal services.

"Their presence here is of importance to our health care system," Kamina Johnson Smith, Jamaica's foreign minister, said at a press briefing last week, noting the island has more than 400 Cuban doctors, nurses, biomedical engineers and technicians.

At least two influential Caribbean leaders, the prime ministers of Trinidad and Tobago and of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, have publicly rallied against the new policy and said they would gladly forgo their U.S. visas.

"I will prefer to lose my visa than to have 60 poor and working people die," said St. Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves.

He said Cuban doctors are providing critical care to patients including 60 who receive dialysis treatment.

"I will not be able to offer that service," he told reporters during a recent official trip to Jamaica.

Meanwhile, Trinidad Prime Minister Keith Rowley told reporters Monday that he wouldn't mind losing his U.S. visa either.

"I just came back from California, and if I never go back there again in my life, I will ensure that the sovereignty of Trinidad and Tobago is known to its people and respected by all," he said at a recent public event where the crowd clapped, according to the Daily Express, a local newspaper. □



Cuban doctors arrive at the Jose Marti International Airport in Havana, Cuba, June 8, 2020, after traveling to Italy to help with the COVID-19 emergency response.

Associated Press

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and

hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appear-

ing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.



Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat

in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling.

Source: visitaruba.com

Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals

(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our

Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that they have to pay before leaving. This is surely not a pleasant experience for the tourist. This also leads to a negative reaction which can put our tourism in a negative light.

Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! □



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Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our “Dorado”

(Oranjestad)—If you’re ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can’t recognize. One of these may be the “Dorado”, a common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here’s some information about the beloved Dorado.

Dorado has many different names it can be referred to. Dral, Dorao, Drals, Drado, are some of them in Papiamentu. In English, it is also called Mahi Mahi, Dolphinfish, or Dorado. It’s a good example to reflect on why there can be many names. The same fish becomes known by different common names, why? Common names come only when a group of people, to understand each other, assign a name to a fish. Mahi Mahi, for example, comes from Hawaii and means “very strong”. Dorado is based on Spanish and refers to the golden



yellow color that the fish shines with under the sun. Why it’s called Dolphinfish in English is not well defined and while there are several stories around this, none have been confirmed.

Dorado is found in all tropical to subtropical oceans around the world. Dorado is very popular both for recreational fishing and for consumption. It is known

among fishermen as an exciting catch and a fish that puts up a good fight. Its meat is very good for consumption and it is also commercially fished for that reason.

They grow very fast, up to 2.7 inches (almost 7 cm) per week. They can live up to a maximum of 5 years although very few reach that age. Most become adults

within 1 year but many become reproductive after just 5 or 6 months and reproduce very quickly too. They live in open water on the surface most of the time. Many fish seek them around sushi lines or floating objects on the sea. Often you will find a group landing together and if you keep a male on the line, often the others will stay close or can keep the group in-

terested by giving shrimp or squid.

Description:

Dorado has a distinctive body. It has a large tail and its long, flat body ends in a large blunt head. Its color of yellow and green or blue makes it immediately recognizable, even with small variations in these colors.

Dorado has clear differences between adult females and males. The male is larger and can easily reach 50 to 80 pounds and has a much flatter head compared to the female. Therefore, male Dorados are also called “bull Dorado”.

Dorado can be found in our waters around the island all year round, but there are periods when it is easier to find than others. □

Source: The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).

A quick snack for the road: Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here’s how to make the Pastechi dough.

Ingredients:

4 cups of wheat flour
1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp sugar
0.5 cup of melted butter
1 cup water
1 egg

Directions:

Sift your flour into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients before giving

it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. At this point, your dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You’ll know your dough is ready when it doesn’t stick to your hands or the surface on which you’re kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would be around ¼ inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to your taste. The easiest

and most common filling you’ll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready for the fryer!

If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in between each pastechi if you are to store them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don’t stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at



any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat pastechis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few. □

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The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history



(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana

was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by

Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and



informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive meth-

ods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa & gold-mineranch.com.



Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive?

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reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Judy Demshar & Jose from Danvers, Mass, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to us is enjoying pristine beaches, food and culture with friends and family for 30 years and counting!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you





Article by Etnia Nativa

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Our Wayaca, Guaiacum Officinale

Our narratives always emphasized the necessary balance that must prevail in all that we do and tolerate, especially on a small island like Aruba. For many generations, our island used to experience an easy-going colonial existence with its own tribal blend. However, the neglect of our cultural heritage and the hazardous incursion against insular biodiversity has reached alarming levels.

The menace of rampant economic development and overpopulation encroachments is a major challenge to natural habitats and sacred lands.

Our platform actively engages in safeguarding the value of rediscovering native traditions that the unique spirit behind being an Aruban is all about, diving into our history and identity, highlighting the importance of moving on beyond all opposition.

In this new episode, we invite you to discover a classic and historically important tropical wood variety, an evergreen species locally known as Wayaca, classified as *Guaiacum officinale*, at one time valued for its medicinal properties while industrially famous for hav-

ing self-lubricating qualities. It is one of the heaviest wood types on the market: Wayaca, known also as Palo Santo, Roughbark, Lignum-vitae, Guaiacwood or Gaicacwood, is one of some wood types that do not float in water.

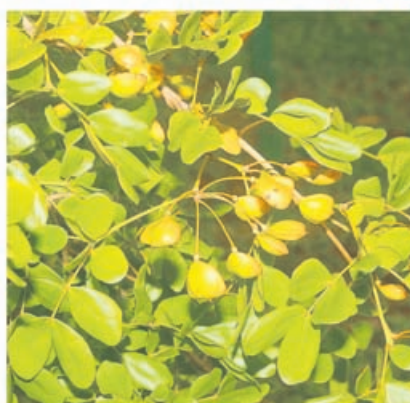
When the Europeans arrived in the Caribbean islands, the Wayaca wood caught their attention since its bark simulated human skin in an advanced stage of syphilis, a disease that was ravaging Europe at the time. The Dutch name is Pokhout, derived from its medical use against Spanish pox, a name indicating syphilis. This has also given rise to the English name lignum vitae (from Latin "wood of life"). Its medical use continued for centuries.

From Dutch seafaring experts, we know that Wayaca wood became the best material for safety nails, pulleys, blocks and in many moving parts in the famous Dutch windmills. Another

Episode CCXCIV -294

historically important application was in the construction of John Harrison's clocks, models for use on ships. Later, it was used on luxury furniture and small objects that require a strong and durable type of wood, such for example a mortar. The Wayaca tree is dark green-brown to black, sometimes with yellow stripes. The sapwood is yellow, usually has a very strong interlaced grain and is extremely resistant to cracking.

We must bear in mind that in Spanish-speaking countries the name Palo Santo (Holy Wood) is also used to call other types of trees that have nothing to do with our Wayaca. Scientifically known as *Bursera graveolens* with characteristics similar to Wayaca, it is a species of plant from the Burseraceae family that grows in dry forests in much of tropical America. Our Wayaca (*Guaiacum officinale*) is found in tropical parts of North and South America but not in Brazil. While different varieties such as *Guaiacum sanctum* are native only to certain tropical parts of North and South America, generally around the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean islands, other varieties such as *Guaiacum coulteri* are known further north. All species of *guaiacum* may only be exported (legally) with a permit. In certain countries, the import of Palo Santo or Wayaca is prohibited and only permitted if it is already an object made out of wood. The consequences of this prohibition, which is difficult to enforce, are reflected in an ever-decreasing supply of wood. Since Palo Santo has always been scarce, there has always been a search for wood species that could replace it. In terms of lubricating properties and wear resistance, Wayaca is practically unique. □



If you enjoyed reading our stories and are interested in learning more regarding the true identity of Aruba, we recommend you to book a visit to Etnia Nativa—the only "living museum of its kind in the Caribbean"—a fascinating choice, a trend setter since 1994 as co-founder of Arikock National Park, Archaeological Museum and Artisan Foundation among others. Etnia Nativa shares valuable knowledge and connects you to the ancient island's spirit and soul.

Whats App+297 592 2702
etnianaativa03@gmail.com

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Roundabouts

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.



Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to

the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other round-

abouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and

the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.



When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! ☐

CROSSWORD

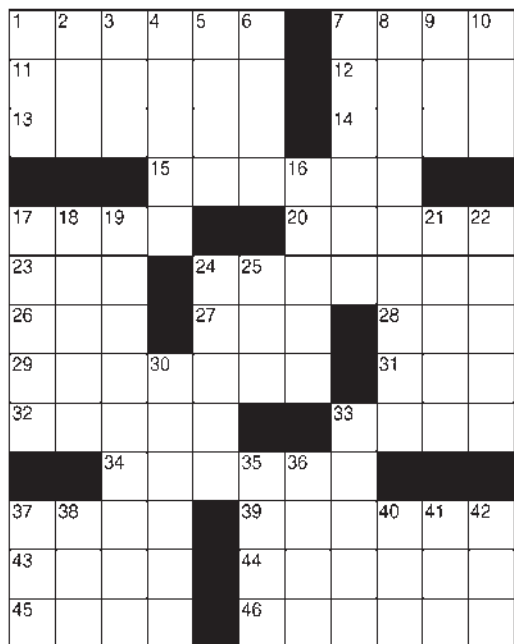
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Cleans
- 7 Tuning knob
- 11 Bee abode
- 12 Obsessed with
- 13 Church officer
- 14 Three or four
- 15 Houdini feat
- 17 Placed down
- 20 Coffee bar order
- 23 Hold title to
- 24 Catch off guard
- 26 Rule in India
- 27 Target
- 28 Poorly
- 29 Gets into something
- 31 Engine need
- 32 Splinter groups
- 33 Travel stops
- 34 Stressful
- 37 Diva's piece
- 39 Parking attendants
- 43 Hen pen
- 44 Makes amends
- 45 Addition column
- 46 Brain, slangily

DOWN

- 1 Used to be
- 2 King Kong, for one
- 3 Caret's key
- 4 Despised
- 5 Amorous archer
- 6 Dubbing concern
- 7 Nanny's nappy
- 8 Disease
- 9 Finished off
- 10 De-pressed
- 16 Second U.S. president
- 17 Leapers in a Christmas song
- 18 In the know
- 19 Disease treatment, some-times
- 21 Bold poker bet
- 22 Chops down
- 24 Fresh
- 25 Even score
- 30 Bra parts
- 33 Snow house
- 35 Infamous czar
- 36 Brussels-based org.
- 37 Join a cast
- 38 Fish eggs
- 40 Cease
- 41 — Aviv
- 42 Direction opposite NNW



3-13

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-13

CRYPTOQUOTE

L H M G Z R M G O Y Y

X A G X Z D Z H M X M G E O G

Z X S R H Z X A X Q J Y C G E X M .

— X . L . U C Z M G X Z

Cryptoquote: LIFE BECOMES EASIER WHEN YOU LEARN TO ACCEPT AN APOLOGY YOU NEVER GOT. — ROBERT BRAULT

Cruise ship Schedule: March 10 - 14 2025

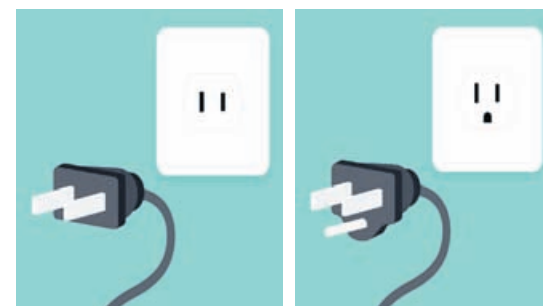
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	10	QUEEN VICTORIA	08.00	17.00	B	1
		COSTA FORTUNA	08.00	17.30	C	1
		ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	09.00	22.00	I	1
TUE	11	ROTTERDAM	08.00	****	B	1
		CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	13.00	21.00	I	1
WED	12	ROTTERDAM - Dept.	****	17.00	B	-
		GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	08.00	****	C	1
		CORAL PRINCESS	09.00	18.00	I	1
THU	13	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS - dept.	****	17.00	C	-
FRI	14	CLUB MED 2	08.00	13.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

At Southwest Airlines, checked bags will no longer fly for free

By **MICHELLE CHAPMAN**
AP Business Writer

Southwest Airlines will begin charging customers a fee to check bags, abandoning a decades-long practice that executives had described last fall as key to differentiating the budget carrier from its rivals. Southwest, which built years of advertising campaigns around its policy of letting passengers check up to two bags for free, said Tuesday that people who haven't either reached



A Southwest Airlines traveler checks a bag at Midway International Airport, Tuesday, March 11, 2025, in Chicago.

Associated Press



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the upper tiers of its Rapid Rewards loyalty program, bought a business class ticket or hold the airline's credit card will have to pay for checked bags.

The airline did not outline the fee schedule but said the new policy would start with flights booked on May 28. "We have tremendous opportunity to meet current and future customer needs, attract new customer segments we don't compete for today, and return to the levels of profitability that both we and our shareholders expect," CEO Bob Jordan said in a statement.

Less than a year ago, the Dallas-based airline announced it was doing away with another tradition, the open-boarding system it has used for more than 50 years. Southwest expects to begin operating flights with passengers in assigned seats next year. Southwest has struggled recently and is under pressure from activist investors to boost profits and revenue. The airline reached a truce in October with hedge fund Elliott Investment Management to avoid a proxy fight, but Elliott won several seats on the company board. The airline announced last

month that it was eliminating 1,750 jobs, or 15% of its corporate workforce, in the first major layoffs in the company's 53-year history. The job cuts, which were scheduled to be mostly completed by the end of June, are part of a plan to slash costs and transform the company into a "leaner, faster, and more agile organization," Jordan said at the time.

Southwest's stock rose more than 9% Tuesday. As recently as Southwest's investor day in late September, airline executives described the bags-fly-free as the most important feature in setting Southwest apart from rivals.

All other leading U.S. airlines charge for checked luggage, and Wall Street has long argued that Southwest was leaving money behind.

The airline estimated in September that charging bag fees would bring in about \$1.5 billion a year but cost the airline \$1.8 billion in lost business from customers who chose to fly Southwest because of its generous baggage allowance.

Southwest said Tuesday that it would continue to offer two free checked bags to Rapid Rewards A-

List preferred members and customers traveling on Business Select fares, and one free checked bag to A-List members and other select customers. Passengers with Rapid Rewards credit cards will receive a credit for one checked bag.

People who don't qualify for those categories will get charged to check bags. The airline said that it also would roll out a new, basic fare on its lowest priced tickets when the change takes effect.

"I would rather have the free checked bags, that's for sure," said customer Dorothy Severson, who was awaiting a flight Tuesday at Chicago Midway International Airport. "It's one of the main reasons I still fly Southwest."

Southwest is betting that the added bag fees will outweigh the loss of business from travelers who look closely at the costs on top of ticket prices. Rivals on Tuesday saw an opening. "I think clearly there are some customers who chose them because of that, and now those customers are up for grabs," said Delta Airlines President Glen Hauenstein, speaking at the J.P. Morgan Industrials Conference.

Yet in the current economic environment, keeping travel affordable may play an outsized roll in staying competitive. The trade war initiated by President Donald Trump is roiling U.S. markets and dampening the high-flying optimism prevalent last year among businesses and households. To start the week, Delta slashed its quarterly earnings and revenue expectations, saying that a recent decline in consumer and corporate confidence over the economy is weakening domestic demand. Shares of Delta have tumbled 24% this year.

Shares of United have slumped 22%, JetBlue 27% and American Airlines a whopping 32%.

On Tuesday, Southwest cut its own expectations for the quarter. The airline now anticipates revenue per available seat mile will rise between 2% and 4%. That is down sharply from its previous projections of a 5% to 7% increase. The airline said it expects capacity to be down about 2%.

The airline announced last year that along with giving passengers assigned seats, it would charge them extra for with more legroom and offer red-eye flights. □



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SETAR

The NBA's Southeast Division is struggling. There's still hope for the Hawks, Magic and Heat

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

This fall will mark the 10th anniversary of the NBA changing its playoff rules and not guaranteeing a division champion a top-four seed regardless of record. This season's Southeast Division is a good reason why that change was necessary.

In NBA history, there's never been a division with a worst won-loss record than the Southeast this season. Entering Monday, the five teams in the Southeast Atlanta, Orlando, Miami, Charlotte and Washington had a combined record of 113-200, that winning percentage of .369 set to be the worst of any division ever.

The official low bar, for now, is a winning percentage .384 by the Central Division in 1970-71. That was a season where Baltimore won the division at 42-40 and Atlanta, Cincinnati and Cleveland combined to go 84-162.

And this is the crazy part



Orlando Magic head coach Jamahl Mosley calls out to an official during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Toronto Raptors, Tuesday, March 4, 2025, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

about the Southeast: this season, Atlanta, Orlando and Miami seem pretty much like locks for the play-in tournament at this point, meaning two of those teams are going to make the playoffs even though

none are on pace to finish with a winning record.

"I don't know division-wise, but I just know it seems in both conferences it's a dogfight," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "With the play-in and everything, it's

been really good for the league. A lot more teams are competing."

The Southeast being the NBA's official battleground division is not a new thing. There won't be a 50-win team from the Southeast

this year; that's no surprise, because there's been only one the 2021-22 Heat, who went 53-29 in the last 10 seasons.

Let's put that in some perspective. The Atlantic Division has had 15 teams reach the 50-win mark over the last decade, the Northwest and Pacific have each had 11, the Central and Southwest have each had nine. Boston is on pace to do it for a sixth time in that span, Cleveland has done it five including this season already, Golden State has done it five and Toronto has five such seasons in that span as well. The Southeast? Nope, just the one.

Forget winning 50 games. Over the last decade there have been only 17 instances out of 50 chances of a Southeast team simply finishing a regular season with a winning record. And someone's going to have to go on a heck of a tear if a team from the Southeast is going to add to that total this season. □

Tiger Woods says he ruptured his Achilles tendon, an injury likely to keep him out of the Masters

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Tiger Woods announced he had a less invasive surgery for a ruptured Achilles tendon on Tuesday, yet another injury that would seem likely to keep him out of the Masters and perhaps other major championships this year.

Woods posted the development on his social media accounts without detailing how long he expected to be out.

"As I began to ramp up my own training and practice at home, I felt a sharp pain in my left Achilles, which was deemed to be ruptured," Woods said.

He said he had minimally invasive Achilles tendon repair for a ruptured tendon that the doctor said went smoothly. Such surgeries involve smaller incisions, and the recovery time is quicker. But most recoveries take a month before someone can even put weight on their foot. Woods said he would focus on rehab and recovery.

The Masters is April 10-13. Woods set the Masters record last year by making the cut for the 24th time in a row. But he has not competed outside of his indoor league except for 18 holes of the Seminole Pro-Member last week since missing the cut in the British Open last summer. □



Tiger Woods flips his club after his shot to the 10th green during the final round of The Players Championship golf tournament Sunday, March 17, 2019, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

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GO-KART RENTALS



Eagles send Gardner-Johnson to Texans. Vikings bolster offensive, defensive lines in NFL free agency

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
AP Pro Football Writer

The Philadelphia Eagles' top-ranked defense is getting a major makeover a month after ending Patrick Mahomes' bid to lead the Kansas City Chiefs to a third consecutive Super Bowl title. A day after defensive tackle Milton Williams and edge rusher Josh Sweat agreed to leave Philly via free agency, the Super Bowl champs agreed to send safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson to the Houston Texans for guard Kenyon Green and a swap of late-round draft picks, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Like free agent contracts, trades will become official with the start of the new league year on Wednesday.

Green, who was the 15th overall pick in the 2022 draft, started 23 games for Houston over two seasons. He didn't play in 2023 because of a shoulder injury. The Texans also agreed to trade left tackle Laremy Tunsil to Washington on Monday. They have big holes up front on an offensive line that struggled to protect C.J. Stroud last season.

On Monday when the league's 52-hour legal tampering window opened, Williams agreed to a deal with New England worth \$26 million annually and Sweat is heading to the Arizona Cardinals on a four-year, \$76.4 million contract. The terms of the deals are all according to people familiar with the negotiations who spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because teams generally don't announce contract terms and the deals can't



New York Giants quarterback Daniel Jones runs with the ball against the Indianapolis Colts during an NFL football game, Jan. 1, 2023, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

be signed until Wednesday, the start of the new league year.

The Minnesota Vikings continued an aggressive reconstruction of the interior lines on Tuesday by agreeing to terms on contracts with former Washington defensive tackle Jonathan Allen (three years, \$60 million) and former Indianapolis guard Will Fries (five years, \$88 million), who followed center Ryan Kelly from the Colts to the Vikings.

Allen missed half of last season after tearing a pectoral muscle, but he returned for the final four games, including the playoffs as the Commanders reached the NFC championship game. Because Allen was released last week for salary cap savings before the expiration of his previous contract, the Vikings were allowed to host the two-time Pro Bowl pick on a visit to team headquarters and announce the deal ahead

of the signing period.

With the addition of Fries and Kelly, the Vikings have taken two big steps toward smoothing out the expected debut of quarterback J.J. McCarthy after his rookie season was waylaid by a knee injury and Sam Darnold departed for Seattle.

Fries will bring instant chemistry with Kelly, a four-time Pro Bowl pick over nine seasons with the Colts whose arrival might well mean the end of Garrett Bradbury's six-year tenure as Minnesota's starting center.

The Vikings have had one of the best tackle tandems in the league with Christian Darrisaw and Brian O'Neill, but interior pass protection has hurt them often. That was never more apparent than in their wild-card round loss to the Rams two months ago, when Darnold was sacked nine times.

QB moves
Challenging Anthony Rich-

ardson for the starting quarterback job in Indianapolis will be Daniel Jones, who agreed to a one-year, \$14 million contract.

Colts general manager Chris Ballard projected this sort of move was in the works when he told reporters at the NFL's annual scouting combine Indy would have an "open" competition for the job.

"I think it's good for the team, I think it's good for Anthony," Ballard said in late February.

"Look, we drafted Anthony high, knowing it was going to take some time, and we knew there was going to be some hiccups along the way."

Jones, the No. 6 overall pick in 2019 by the Giants who went 24-44-1 in New York with one playoff victory, will get a chance to prove he can still be a starter in the league.

He finished last season as a backup for the Vikings after

the Giants released him.

Richardson was the fourth overall pick in the 2023 draft but has struggled with both injuries and accuracy in his first two NFL seasons. He's just 8-7 as a starter and last season had the lowest completion rate, 47.7%, of any starting quarterback in the NFL. In two seasons, Richardson also has 11 touchdown passes and 13 interceptions.

Other deals

* The Commanders agreed to sign safety Will Harris to a two-year contract. Harris leaves New Orleans after one season to become the replacement for Jeremy Chinn in Washington.

* The 49ers added some depth at safety a day after losing Talanoa Hufanga to Denver. San Francisco agreed to a one-year deal with former Atlanta second-round pick Richie Grant, who started 33 games for the Falcons but was mostly a backup and special teams player last season.

*The Cowboys retained free agent DT Osa Odighizuwa (four years, \$80 million) and shored up their thin interior defensive line by adding former Jets DT Solomon Thomas (two years, \$8 million).

*The Falcons' first free agent addition is LB Divine Deablo (two years), who had 63 tackles in 14 games with the Raiders last season and 106 in 15 games in 2023. * The Chiefs have agreed to a two-year, \$20 million contract with former Titans and Chargers cornerback Kristian Fulton. His size, physicality and versatility will help to free up All-Pro CB Trent McDuffie.

Carolina released veteran running back Miles Sanders. □